

HOUSE BILL REPORT

E2SSB 6683

As Reported By House Committee On:
Transportation

Title: An act relating to reporting information on routine traffic enforcement.

Brief Description: Reporting information on routine traffic enforcement.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senators Franklin, Kline, Heavey, Thibaudeau and Costa).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/21/00, 2/23/00 [DP].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Second Substitute Bill

- Requires the Washington State Patrol (WSP) to gather data on vehicle stops and searches made by the WSP to examine whether racial profiling is a factor in deciding who to stop.
- Requires the WSP to report its findings to the Legislature by December 1, 2000.
- Directs the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs to encourage local law enforcement to voluntarily gather the data and report to the Legislature on data being collected locally.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 22 members: Representatives Fisher, Democratic Co-Chair; Mitchell, Republican Co-Chair; Cooper, Democratic 1st Vice Chair; Edwards, Democratic 2nd Vice Chair; Ericksen, Republican Vice Chair; Hankins, Republican Vice Chair; G. Chandler; DeBolt; Fortunato; Haigh; Lovick; Mielke; Murray; Ogden; Pflug; Radcliff; Romero; Schual-Berke; Scott; Skinner; Wood and Woods.

Staff: Paul Neal (786-7315).

Background:

There has been recent concern about the possibility of "racial profiling," or the practice of targeting certain racial groups for traffic stops. While some local law enforcement agencies have collected some data on the issue, and the WSP has been collecting some information since October 1999, no comprehensive study of the problem has been done to determine whether the practice is widespread in Washington.

Summary of Bill:

Beginning May 1, 2000, the WSP must collect data on all traffic stops. The data collected includes total number of stops, reason for each stop, race or ethnicity, age, and gender of individuals stopped, whether there was a search, and whether there was an arrest or citation issued. The WSP is currently gathering these data elements except data on searches. A report on this data must be made to the Legislature by December 1, 2000.

The WSP must cooperate with the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs to develop further criteria for use and evaluation of racial profiling data and training for officers. A report must be made to the Legislature by December 1, 2000, concerning voluntary cooperation by local law enforcement agencies.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Requested on February 21, 2000.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: Racial profiling appears to be a factor in determining who is stopped by law enforcement for questioning. It is important to get data to determine the extent in which this is occurring so that the issue can be better explored.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Thomas Dixon, Tacoma Urban League; Cheryl Swalling, Black Collective; James Kelly, Urban League of Metropolitan Seattle; Tony Orange, African American Affairs Commission; Chief Annette Sandberg, Washington State Patrol; Jerry Sheehan, American Civil Liberties Union of WA; Larry Erickson, WA Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs; Dr. Shirl Gilbert, Tacoma Empowerment Consortium; and Onofre Contreaas, Commission on Hispanic Affairs.